



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of Wisconsin*

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PRESS RELEASE

June 11, 2008

Milwaukee Area Restaurant Owner Indicted for Hiring and Harboring Illegal Aliens

United States Attorney Steven M. Biskupic announced that a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Wisconsin yesterday returned an indictment charging restaurant owner Rong "Ricky" Shi, 37, of Merton, WI. with 4 separate counts of harboring illegal aliens for financial gain.

The charges resulted from a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) criminal worksite investigation. The investigation started when ICE agents received a request for assistance from the Waukesha Police Department. On April 29, 2008 ICE agents executed a federal search warrant at 2208 Melody Lane in Waukesha where they took 4 illegal aliens from Mexico and China into custody. The criminal complaint filed in the case alleges that Shi operated Asiana restaurant, located at 1198 George Towne Drive in Pewaukee and knowingly hired the four illegal aliens to work for him. It is also alleged that Shi harbored them at a residence he owns on Melody Lane.

Over the last several years, ICE has dramatically enhanced its efforts to combat employers who unlawfully employ illegal aliens in the United States. The agency's strategy for effective worksite enforcement is aimed at promoting national security, protecting critical infrastructure, and ensuring fair labor standards. Last year, ICE secured more than \$30 million in criminal fines, restitutions, and civil judgments in worksite enforcement cases. ICE arrested 863 people in criminal cases and made more than 4,000 administrative arrests, which is a dramatic increase over the previous five years.

According to Brian Falvey, resident agent-in-charge of the ICE Office in Milwaukee, "bringing criminal charges against unscrupulous employers and targeting their illegal profits are tactics we are adopting nationwide. ICE has found criminal sanctions to be a very effective deterrent to illegal employment schemes."

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Melvin K. Washington. If convicted, Shi faces a maximum possible penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of not more than \$250,000 for each separate count. It should be noted that an indictment is merely the formal method of charging an individual and does not constitute inference of his or her guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until such time, if ever, that the government establishes his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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